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It has been well said by Mr. G. A. Macfarren, in one of his articles on the "Music of the English Church," that the singing of hymns to the popular tunes of the day, "has been acted upon with wanton extravagance, reckless alike of all effect and of all consequence, save that of giving a passive pleasure to the vulgar crowd, and of gaining a momentary popularity for the local practiser of the system." Here, indeed, is an attempt to escape from the dullness of which we have been speaking; but let us take another extract from the same article before we comment upon this significant fact. "The tune of Miss Ann Catley's Hornpipe, so called because that favorite of the public was wont to dance to it, was originally sung by the same versatile performer in Kane O'Hara's dramatic piece, *The Golden Pippin*, as a song named 'The Guardian Angel;' this name gave it sufficient odour of sanctity for Madan, the popular preacher of the Lock Chapel, to include it in his collection of hymn-tunes, where it first figured under the less pious and far less significant title of 'Helmsley.'" Mr. Macfarren afterwards speaks of the tune called "Rousseau's dream," which was a dance in a comic opera; and "Pilgrims of the Night," an unmitigated French dance tune, as two good specimens of secular airs which have been pressed into the service of the Church. Could more positive proof than this be adduced, that the confiding members of a congregation (however rigid they may be in their uneducated notions upon religious music) will listen most devoutly to secular strains, provided only that they have been properly sanctified by a sacred title.

But it is not by thus desecrating the Church that we would desire to introduce music of a less lugubrious character than we have alluded to in the early part of our remarks. We know that secular tunes are usually inseparably united in the mind with secular ideas; and compositions therefore written to sacred words, should always spring from the mind of one who (like the grand old church composers) can glorify in notes the faith in which he believes.

But our object here is not so much to define what music is admissible for our Protestant Church service, as to speak of that which should be fitly introduced into the family circle. Presuming on the ignorance of the public, a large trade has lately been carried on in what may be called "Sabbath music;" and in the interest of true art, as well as true religion, it is good that this subject should be properly ventilated. We can, of course, have no objection to the works of the true writers for the Church being included in such a selection; but when we find that the majority of these are garbled portions of movements, taken at random from various composers; short pianoforte pieces, with interpolations introduced by the bungling "arrangers;" and airs, which by some sacred title, are made to look religious; with vapid and tedious variations, (so that vanity and devotion may be simultaneously appealed to) we think it high time that a warning voice should be raised against a system so pernicious in its effects. The best specimens of real sacred music lie around us all, and are to be purchased at a price within the reach of every one. Why, then, have recourse to bundles of heterogeneous materials labelled "Sunday Firesides," or "Holy Recreations?" Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Mendelssohn, and many others, have supplied us with works which require no editorial dress-

ing up to fit them for the "firesides" of all who feel that religious words can only be united to religious music by those chosen few, who are impressed with the sacredness of their trust.

But it would be good, if possible, to widen our collection of such music by the occasional introduction of compositions, which, if not named "sacred" by the composer, are no less capable of producing the truest feelings of devotion. We agree with Mr. Macfarren (as we have already said) in his assertion, that the words to which music has been originally set, will intrude themselves upon the mind whenever the notes are heard; but we particularly wish to enforce the fact that instrumental compositions have no such character originally stamped upon them. It is true that certain "social surroundings" may have clung to many of them; but, abstractedly, the character of a composition is determined by the feeling it expresses. Some of the slow movements of Beethoven's Sonatas, many of Bach's works, and several of Mendelssohn's "*Lieder ohne worte*," for instance, are truly religious; in proof of which Gounod has written an "Ave Maria" to Bach's first prelude, in C. The admission of such works as these will tend materially to elevate the tone of Sunday evening music. Our opening remarks as to the absurdity of supposing that anything sacred must be absolutely dull, will, we are sure, be endorsed by all who have true religion in their hearts; and to such only we appeal. The subject has the deepest interest; and, to those who can calmly reflect upon it, the truth must be obvious, that as a man is not necessarily religious because he is serious—so music is not necessarily religious because it is doleful.

HER MAJESTY'S OPERA.

THE general execution of *Faust* at this theatre has scarcely satisfied the admirers of Gounod's music; for although Madlle. Nilsson looks the part of *Margherita* to perfection, there is a coldness in her delivery of much of the impassioned vocal music which renders the part colourless to those who are thoroughly imbued with the characteristics of Goethe's heroine. Signor Ferensì, too, has no claim whatever to be admitted as a first tenor in a lyrical theatre of the highest class: and his assumption of the arduous part of *Faust* is too great a trial to the forbearance of so exacting an audience. The revival of *Il Flauto Magico* has been a most welcome one, since it gave us the opportunity of hearing Madlle. Titiens, as *Pamina*, Madlle. Nilsson, as *Astrijammante*, and Madlle. Sinico as *Papagena*. Madlle. Nilsson, although suffering from indisposition, was encoired in the air "*Va ritorla*," the last movement of which she repeated with such obvious difficulty that no person could have been surprised at her being compelled to omit her second song altogether. When will audiences cease to exact, or singers cease to respond to, a tax so thoroughly absurd and obnoxious? A notice of the performance of *Il Flauto Magico* would be incomplete, were we not to mention the excellent acting and singing of Mr. C. Lyall, as *Monostatos*.

ROYAL ITALIAN OPERA.

THE revival of Gounod's opera *Romeo e Giulietta* at this establishment has had the effect of increasing our admiration of Madlle. Patti's *Juliet*, and our wonder at the absurdity of Signor Mario being put forward in a part which he is obviously unable to sing. Respecting the chorus, we have already had a word to say on more than one occasion; and a letter from a correspondent in our present number, shows that we by no means stand alone in our estimate of the slovenly manner in which the